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REMARKS

Claims 1-18 were subject to a restriction requirement. Applicants elect, without traverse Group I, claims 1-13, drawn to absorbent articles, and have cancelled claims 14-18 via this Amendment. Applicants further elect species 3, adhesives bandages, for prosecution on the merits at this time. Applicants have not cancelled claims 11 and 12 in the event that Claim 1 may be found patentable and to read on claims 11 and 12. At such time Applicants would request reconsideration of the species election requirement.

Claim 2 is objected to for lack of antecedent basis with respect to "the fibers". In view of the amendment to claim 1 Applicants respectfully submit that claim 2 has been corrected.

Claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 9, 10 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Pike (US. 6,353,948). Applicants respectfully traverse.

As indicated at Page 14, lines 3-9, moist wounds generally are preferred for better healing. The relatively lower density of fabrics utilized in Applicants' claimed articles, from about 0.01 to 0.05 g/cc, are believed to provide reduced aggressiveness of liquid absorption at the wound, thus providing for a more moist wound and combined improved wound healing and ease of removal.

A determination of anticipation under 35 U.S.C. 102 requires a finding that each and every limitation is found either expressly or inherently in a single prior art reference. *PIN/NIP, Inc. v. Platte Chemical Co.*, 304 F.2d 1235, 1243, 64 USPQ2d 1344 (Fed. Cir. 2002). A single prior art reference anticipates a claim if it expressly or inherently describes each and every limitation set forth in a claim. *Trintec Industries, Inc. v. Top-U.S.A. Corp.*, 295 F.3d 1292, 1295, 63 USPQ2d 1597 (Fed. Cir. 2002).

The Office Action maintains that Pike discloses an absorbent article having a density from about 0.01 to 0.05 g/cc (col. 6, ll. 27-39). Applicants respectfully disagree. Pike discloses average fiber cross-sectional area, average fiber diameter, fiber denier and fabric basis weight, but Applicants respectfully submit that nowhere in Pike is the density of an absorbent article disclosed. As such, Applicants respectfully submit that Pike fails to expressly disclose the claimed density range of Applicants articles.

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Applicants further submit that the fabrics disclosed in Pike would not inherently have a density between about 0.01 and 0.05 g/cc. As noted at page 12, ll. 16-22 of Applicants' specification, fabric density will vary depending on the type and denier of a fiber, in addition to the thickness and basis weight of the fabric comprising the fibers. As to denier, Pike discloses fiber denier less than about 1.0, desirably from about 0.025 to 0.9, and more preferably from 0.1 to 0.5. Fibers that may be used to produce Applicants' claimed articles have deniers ranging from about 1 to about 15, or from about 3 to about 10 (Page 11, line 27 – Page 12, line 2). Pike discloses a basis weight between 5 g/m² to 340 g/m², while the basis weight of Applicants' articles may range from about 30 g/m² to about 150 g/m². A key factor in determining density of nonwoven fabrics is the thickness of the fabric. In order to determine the thickness, the pressure applied to the fabric must be ascertained. Yet, Applicants respectfully submit that Pike is silent as to the thickness of fabrics contemplated by Pike.

In view of the variables related to density of a fabric, the fiber denier disclosed in Pike, the broad range in basis weight of Pike and the lack of any discussion regarding thickness, Applicants respectfully submit that fabrics contemplated by Pike would not inherently possess densities between about 0.01 and 0.05 g/cc. As Pike neither expressly or inherently discloses fabrics having densities between about 0.01 and 0.05, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 9, 10 and 13 are not anticipated by Pike and request that the rejection of claims under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) be withdrawn.

Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Pike in view of Utz (EP 403 187 A1). Applicants respectfully traverse.

Initially, Applicants reiterate the arguments made in response to the 102(b) rejections with respect to Pike and respectfully submit that Pike fails to disclose, either expressly or inherently, fabrics having densities between about 0.01 and 0.05 g/cc. Applicants further respectfully submit that Pike neither teaches nor suggests fabrics having densities as claimed by Applicants. Rather, Applicants submit that Pike teaches away from such articles comprising fabrics having such relatively lower densities. Pike teaches using fibers having denier from about 0.025 to 0.9, while Applicants' invention may utilize fibers having denier from about 1 to about 15. Notwithstanding Utz's teachings as to fiber material, Applicants

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respectfully submit that Utz does not cure the deficiencies of Pike with respect to fabric density and thus the combination of Pike and Utz does not render obvious the article of claim 2. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claim 2 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) be withdrawn.

Claims 5, 7 and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Pike in view of Radel (4,342,314). Applicants respectfully traverse.

Initially, Applicants reiterate the arguments made in response to the 102(b) and 103(a) rejections of claims 1-4, 6, 9, 10 and 13, respectively, with respect to Pike and respectfully submit that Pike fails to disclose, either expressly or inherently, or teach or suggest, and furthermore teaches away from fabrics having densities between about 0.01 and 0.05 g/cc. Applicants further submit that Radel fails to cure the deficiencies of Pike with respect to fabric density and that the combination of Pike and Radel fails to render obvious claims 5, 7 or 8. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 5, 7 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) be withdrawn.

Applicants respectfully submit that the Amendment is a complete response to the Office Action. Should the Examiner find the above arguments persuasive with respect to claims 1-10 and 13, Applicants request that claims 11 and 12 be considered in view of the arguments. Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-13 are patentable and request a Notice of Allowance to that affect.

Respectfully submitted,

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DATED: February 2, 2006